

Abraham T. Cuyler

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A FOOL'S ERRAND, 1866

the other better than the thinker knew his own. The Northern man despised his Southern fellow-citizen in bulk, as a good-natured *bragadocio*, mindful of his own ease, fond of power and display, and with no animating principle which could in any manner interfere with his interest. The Southern man despised his Northern compeer as cold-blooded, selfish, hypocritical, cowardly, and envious.

This is how they played at cross-purposes, each thinking that he knew the other's heart far better than he sought to know his own.

ANTE BELLUM.

NORTHERN IDEA OF SLAVERY.

Slavery is wrong morally, politically, and economically. It is tolerated only for the sake of peace and quiet. The negro is a man, and has equal inherent rights with the white race.

SOUTHERN IDEA OF SLAVERY.

The negro is fit only for slavery. It is sanctioned by the Bible, and it must be right; or, if not exactly right, is unavoidable, now that the race is among us. We can not live with them in any other condition.

NORTHERN IDEA OF THE SOUTHERN IDEA.

Those Southern fellows know that slavery is wrong, and incompatible with the theory of our government; but it is a good thing for them. They grow fat and rich, and have a good time, on account of it; and no one can blame them for not wanting to give it up.

SOUTHERN IDEA OF THE NORTHERN IDEA.

Those Yankees are jealous because we make slavery profitable, raising cotton and tobacco, and want to deprive us of our slaves from envy. They don't believe a word of what they say about its being wrong, except a few fanatics. The rest are all hypocrites.

POST BELLUM.

THE NORTHERN IDEA OF THE SITUATION.

The negroes are free now, and must have a fair chance to make themselves something. What is claimed about their inferiority may be true. It is not likely to approve itself; but, true or false, they have a right to equality before the law. That is what the war meant, and this

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must be secured to them. The rest they must get as they can, or do without, as they choose.

THE SOUTHERN IDEA OF THE SITUATION.

We have lost our slaves, our bank stock, every thing, by the war. We have been beaten, and have honestly surrendered; slavery is gone, of course. The slave is now free, but he is not white. We have no ill will towards the colored man as such, and in his place; but he is not our equal, can not be made our equal, and we will not be ruled by him, or admit him as a co-ordinate with the white race in power. We have no objection to his voting, so long as he votes as his old master, or the man for whom he labors, advises him; but, when he chooses to vote differently, he must take the consequences.

THE NORTHERN IDEA OF THE SOUTHERN IDEA.

Now that the negro is a voter, the Southern people will have to treat him well, because they will need his vote. The negro will remain true to the government and party which gave him liberty, and in order to secure its preservation. Enough of the Southern whites will go with them, for the sake of office and power, to enable them to retain permanent control of those States for an indefinite period. The negroes will go to work, and things will gradually adjust themselves. The South has no right to complain. They would have the negroes as slaves, kept the country in constant turmoil for the sake of them, brought on the war because we would not catch their runaways, killed a million of men; and now they can not complain if the very weapon by which they held power is turned against them, and is made the means of righting the wrongs which they have themselves created. It may be hard, but, they will learn to do better hereafter.

THE SOUTHERN IDEA OF THE NORTHERN IDEA.

The negro is made a voter simply to degrade and disgrace the white people of the South. The North cares nothing about the negro as a man, but only enfranchises him in order to humiliate and enfeeble us. Of course, it makes no difference to the people of the North whether he is a voter or not. There are so few colored men there, that there is no fear of one of them being elected to office, going to the Legislature, or sitting on the bench. The whole purpose of the measure is to insult and degrade. But only wait until the States are restored and the "Blue Coats" are out of the way, and we will show them their mistake.

There was just enough of truth in each of these estimates of the other's characteristics to mislead. The South, as a mass, was honest in its belief of the righteousness of slavery, both